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U. S. Department of Agriculture

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Housekeepers' Chat

Tues. Jan. 17, 1928.

Subject: "Cereal Cookery" Information, including recipe, from U. S. Bureau of Home Economics.

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"Uncle Ebenezer," I said yesterday morning, at the breakfast table, "what is your favorite cereal food?"

"Fried mush," said Uncle Ebenezer, promptly. "When I was a kid, Aunt Samry, we used to grind our own corn, and my father and I would pick out the nicest ears, for cornmeal. Sometimes we'd have mush and milk for supper, and fried mush the next morning for breakfast. I can almost see that platter of fried mush now," said Uncle Ebenezer, his blue eyes growing dreamy. "Golden brown, crisp, delightfully granular. A man feels that life is worth living, after he has eaten six or seven slices of nut-brown fried mush, Aunt Sammy."

Following that eloquent statement, Uncle Ebenezer put his newspaper in his pocket, and left for the day, while I went on the trail of a new recipe for Fried Cornmeal mush. And do you think I found it? I should say I did. Not an ordinary recipe, either, but a recipe which will put the Fried Mush Family in the Culinary Who's Who, along with Upside-Down-Apple Cake.

Before I broadcast this recipe, however, I must answer a listener who says she is all at sea about meal-planning. She has been married only three weeks, and says she knows nothing at all about planning meals. So maybe I'd better tell her first what we mean by meal-planning, so that she can write it in her notebook. (Read slowly) Meal-planning is combining the five main groups of foods, in the right proportions, and in wholesome, attractive, and appetizing ways.

Of course, before we can combine the five main groups of foods, we must know what they are. It might be a good idea to write down these five main groups of foods, for future references. Ready with your pencils?

Group I. Vegetables and fruits. Vegetables and fruits are rich in mineral matter, which we must have for bones, and teeth, and to keep the body in good working order. Fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, too, necessary for normal growth; and bulky material, which prevents constipation.

Group II includes the efficient-protein foods. Efficient-protein foods are milk, eggs, cheese, meats, poultry, fish, and so forth. All these foods contain protein. We call it "efficient-protein" because it is used to build new tissues, and repair old tissues.

Next, Group III. Group III includes the cereal foods-- rice, barley, wheat, and corn; breakfast foods, hominy, flour, meal, bread, crackers, macaroni,

even toast and biscuits. The starch in these foods is used as fuel. It keeps the body warm, and supplied with energy. Some of the cereals-- corn, for instance-- contain fat. Whole-grain cereals supply roughage, minerals, and vitamins.

Now we're ready for Group IV. Group IV includes sweets, which are also used as fuel. In this group we place sugar, honey, molasses, sirups, jellies, rich preserves, candy, and so forth. We need to guard against eating too much sweet food, especially before meals, or our appetites will be so dulled that we won't eat our proper share of other foods. Some dried foods, such as figs, raisins, prunes, and dates, might also be included in Group IV. They can often be used instead of other sweets, and they are valuable for the minerals they contain.

The last group-- Number V --includes the fats and fat foods, such as butter, cream, lard, suet, table oils, salt pork, bacon, chocolate, and nuts. All these foods are used as fuel. Fats are the most concentrated of all the foods. Some fats, especially butter and cream, are sources of vitamins. Others, like chocolate, contain minerals.

The five main groups of foods, then, are: First, Vegetables and Fruits; second, Efficient-Protein Foods; third, Cereal Foods; fourth, Sweets; and fifth, Fats and Fat Foods. These five groups, combined in the right proportions, make what we call "well-balanced" meals.

And what do we mean by the "right proportions"?

As a general rule, Group I, or Vegetables and Fruits, should furnish one-fifth of the fuel our bodies need; Efficient-Protein foods, one-fourth; Cereal Foods, one-fourth; Sweets, only one-tenth; and Fats and Fat Foods, one-fifth. People who do very heavy muscular work, may need a larger proportion of the cereals, sweets, and fatty foods.

In planning the day's meals, it is not necessary that every meal include every group of foods, but each group should be represented in the daily diet.

Now, a word about cereal cookery. We used to believe that we had to cook cereals many hours, in order to make them easy to digest. Now we know that this long cooking is not necessary, from the standpoint of digestion. Of course many prepared breakfast foods are partially cooked in the process of manufacture. These breakfast foods can be cooked in the home in a short time. The real point in cereal cookery is to cook the cereal long enough to get rid of the raw starch taste, and to develop an appetizing flavor. Other points that need emphasis are to get the right proportions of water and cereal, and to season well with salt.

Now you may write the recipe, for Fried Cheese Corn Meal Mash. Four ingredients:

2 cups yellow corn meal
3 teaspoons salt

4 cups cold water
3/4 to 1 pound sharp cheese

Four ingredients. Please count them: (Repeat ingredients).

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Mix the corn meal, salt, and cold water, in the upper part of a double boiler. Cook over the direct flame until boiling, and boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Place the upper part of the double boiler into the lower part, and cook the corn meal mush for one hour. Shave or flake the cheese into small pieces, add it to the mush, and stir until the cheese is melted. Pour the cheese mush into a wet dish or pan, and let stand overnight. When set into a firm mold, cut the mush into slices about 1/2 inch thick, sprinkle with flour, and fry slowly in shallow fat, until golden brown on both sides. Serve hot with tart jelly.

That concludes the recipe, which has been thoroughly tested by the U. S. Bureau of Home Economics.

Every now and then some radio friend asks how to make lye hominy, or hulled corn. This recipe, with about 50 other recipes, for corn, is found in a free bulletin, called "Corn and Its Uses as Food." I shall be glad to send you this bulletin if you want it.

Tomorrow I shall talk about dressmaking, and also give you a dinner menu, and a new recipe.

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